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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS GROUP

WEEKLY SUMMARY NO. 27

For week ending 16 November 1948

The Week in the UN

Berlin and Palestine returned to the limelight in the UN this week. The Lie-Evatt statement, although apparently conciliatory toward the USSR, seems designed to refocus attention on Berlin and thus to encourage further attempts at compromise. In a new approach to extinguishing the Palestine conflict and paving the way for final settlement, the Security Council approved replacement of the present truce by an armistice with clear lines of demarcation between Arab and Israeli forces. After a bitter East-West clash, the Soviet propaganda proposal for one-third disarmament was defeated 30-6 (Slav bloc). Extensive Soviet and Satellite filibustering failed to stop General Assembly Political Committee condemnation of Satellite interference in Greece and approval for the continuation of the UN Balkan Commission. Although the four parties are now meeting in response to a GA appeal, the meeting is expected to have little result.

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A Lie and Evatt seek to encourage Berlin compromise. The Lie-Evatt statement calling upon the four parties to the Berlin dispute to resume conversations looking to its solution and to support SC President Bramuglia's mediation efforts appears designed: (a) to focus world opinion once again on the gravity of the situation; and (b) to create thereby pressure favoring another attempt at settlement. Despite the expected Soviet and Western replies, the statement has at least partially achieved this objective. The statement was not so much a concession to the Soviet position as an endeavor to conciliate the USSR. While Lie and Evatt could scarcely have hoped that the West would recede from its basic stand against direct negotiations prior to lifting of the blockade, they recognized that the USSR rather than the West constituted the essential obstacle to settlement and designedly couched their proposal in the most conciliatory language possible.

The statement has on the other hand been widely criticized as another of Mr. Evatt's ill-conceived efforts to assume the grand role of conciliator between East and West. Based on the vague exhortations toward big power sweetness and light contained in the Mexican resolution, the proposal makes no differentiation between the moral responsibilities of the parties to the Berlin dispute. It is equivocal, perhaps by design, on whether the Powers are

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called upon to negotiate directly or to have another try at agreement through the Bramuglia group. The first alternative has been seized upon by the USSR, whose reply reiterated the Soviet stand that Berlin was a matter for the Council of Foreign Ministers. This alternative has, in turn, been rejected by the Western Powers, which prefer to await the results of Bramuglia's more discreet efforts. By negotiating through the screen of the SC group, the Western Powers can preserve the appearance of refusing to negotiate under duress.

While the lie-Evatt statement has accomplished little in a concrete sense to advance solution of the Berlin dispute, it may create an atmosphere in which the second compromise proposal of the six "neutrals," apparently in the offing, will exert greater effect than the first. Bramuglia is believed to be working on a new proposal whereby a ready-made currency plan will be put into effect simultaneously with the lifting of the blockade. Secretary General Lie has also put his Secretariat technicians to work on an acceptable currency plan. Should the mediators be able to hammer out such a plan, the Soviet objection based on a lack of "simultaneity" may be circumvented.

Thus the second compromise proposal, by narrowing the gap between the eastern and western positions, will improve the chances of a Berlin settlement. Since Soviet rejection of the first SC compromise was based on lack of "simultaneity," the USSR will find it more difficult to reject a new proposal meeting this objection. Although plenty of room for disagreement will still exist over the terms of any currency plan, it appears that a compromise settlement on Berlin is nevertheless being brought closer to realization.

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SC seeks Palestine armistice. The Security Council has adopted a new approach to the Palestine conflict in calling on Arabs and Jews to negotiate a permanent armistice either directly or through the acting Mediator. The resolution is designed to bring about: (a) the establishment of permanent demarcation lines to contain the armed forces of the adversaries; and (b) such withdrawal and reduction of troops as will end hostilities. It also stipulates that the implementation of the earlier SC resolution calling on the Israelis to withdraw to their 14 October positions in the Negeb will not be prejudiced. This reservation was inserted to satisfy the UK, faced with Arab pressure to resume arms deliveries in the event of SC failure to enforce the truce.

The new approach reflects a recognition that no mere resolution unsupported by sanctions or even force could succeed in dislodging the Jews from the Negeb. Should an armistice be arranged, it would be clearly attributable to the military successes of the Israelis. Unable to shape events, the Council now seeks to create an atmosphere favorable to a settlement. The USSR advocated going even further by recognizing the present

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military situation and calling on the belligerents to negotiate not an armistice but peace.

Meanwhile the GA Political Committee has just commenced its work on a final Palestine settlement. With so little time remaining and a two-thirds majority required to alter the 1947 partition plan, it is doubtful whether a decision can be reached before adjournment in December. There is talk of setting up a conciliation agency (consisting of either an individual or a commission) to prepare some solution for submission to the next GA session. Further postponement of the question, however, involves the risk that the UN would miss the chance of taking action at a time when recent memories of the war, the assassination of Mediator Bernadotte and decisive military successes still provide a favorable climate for settlement. This combination of circumstances plus the lightening of the Political Committee load resulting from the establishment of an ad hoc committee to handle certain agenda items provides some hope for a solution. Such a settlement would probably be closer to the original partition plan than to the Bernadotte Plan which has been losing momentum as a consequence of the military developments in Palestine.

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A Likely GA action on Korean Case. The core of the Korean problem is whether the South Korean Government established by elections held under UN supervision can or cannot be considered as the national Government envisaged in the 1947 GA resolution. With two rival administrations in the peninsula -- one Communist-elected but without UN supervision -- many nations are hesitant to consider the UN-sponsored Seoul regime as national in scope, rather sharing the compromise UK position that it can be considered national although effective only in those areas which it controls. Tightening of small power opposition to Slav tactics at this session has, however, led some states to abandon their opposition, thus bringing to thirty-one the total in favor of recognizing the Rhee Government as the Government of all Korea. The solid GA opposition to hearing representatives of the North Korean Government also indicates that a more unified anti-Soviet stand may be forthcoming.

Fighting tooth and nail to forestall UN recognition of the Seoul Government, the USSR may well advance, should its losing battle become apparent, a proposal for a federation of the northern and southern administrations. India, anxious to avoid any definite partition of Korea would doubtless favor such a plan, while the conciliating Australians would also see some merit in it. Although such a proposal might appeal to several nations outside the Eastern bloc, it is not anticipated that sufficient support could be obtained for its passage.

The most likely GA action will be recognition of the Seoul regime and the return of a UN commission to Korea; such a body would act as a deterrent to Communist violence. The commission would probably be charged with seeking a formula for incorporation of North Korea into the national Government.

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Another aspect of the Korean problem is further implementation of the 1947 resolution calling, among other things, for gradual withdrawal of occupation troops. In view of the Communist successes in China and the recent abortive revolt in the south of Korea, the Seoul Government may ask the UN to permit a US security force to remain until Korean troops are sufficiently trained to resist the anticipated push from the Communists in the North. Since the Soviets "voluntarily" withdrew from their occupation area, the Slav bloc will squeeze every iota of propaganda value from such a request.

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A Eastern European labor subsidizes French strike. Substantial sums recently made available to the striking French coal miners demonstrate that the Communist labor forces in the USSR and its Satellites are lending support in unprecedented and almost uniform amounts to the Communist body blow against the recovery program in France. The CGT miners have reportedly received contributions of 10 million francs each from the Czech and Yugoslav national trade union organizations and over 18 million francs from the Soviet miners' unions. In addition, they have been promised approximately 19 million francs from the Polish unions. These moves, reinforced by smaller subsidies from left-wing labor elements in the UK and Italy, may reflect decisions taken at the Prague meeting of Cominform agents and trade unionists reportedly held in September to concert plans for undermining the ERP. They constitute only the latest and most massive indication of Soviet determination to employ the Communist labor forces at its disposal in a coordinated offensive against Western European recovery.

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Egypt impedes UN Arab refugee relief. The UN Refugee Officer in Cairo, denied permission to visit Arab refugee camps in Egyptian-occupied southern Palestine, is discouraged by the uncooperativeness of the Egyptian Government and the Arab Higher Relief Council. A Syrian Health Ministry official on loan to the Arab League reports that refugees in this area have had to forage for food, eating whatever the Egyptian troops leave behind. The Egyptian Army, while disclaiming responsibility for the refugees, prohibits observers or relief workers from entering the area. Such Egyptian and Arab obstructionism is likely, in consequence, to be the first major problem confronting the new UN Director for Palestine Refugee Relief to be appointed by Secretary General Lie.

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UNESCO Conference convenes as political issues are by-passed. The third plenary session of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

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recently postponed because of tensions arising from the Palestine conflict, will meet this week in Beirut despite the flat Lebanese refusal to admit Israeli nationals either as observers or as "guests". The Lebanese Foreign Office maintains that it cannot alter this position so long as Israeli armed forces occupy Lebanese soil. Another political obstacle which might have impeded the Conference was removed by the recent US-UK agreement to support the candidacy of India's Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar for the post of Director General. The choice of Mudaliar, generally considered India's ablest UN representative, to replace the quixotic and unpredictable Julian Amery (UK) reflects Anglo-American desires to give more prominent representation to the increasingly articulate UN colonial bloc.

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